

To: Chris Sebastian/R2/USEPA/US@EPA[]
Cc: "Fefferman, Carolyn (Menendez)" [Carolyn_Fefferman@menendez.senate.gov]
From: "Connolly, Hal (Menendez)"
Sent: Mon 6/18/2012 5:30:53 PM
Subject: RE: EPA News Release: Seventy Companies Reach Agreement with EPA to Remove Highly Contaminated Mud from Lyndhurst Section of the Passaic River
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epa.gov/region2/newsevents
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Here is an article about that announcement

EPA planning cleanup of the Passaic River

by Mark Mueller and Brian T. Murray/The Star-Ledger

Saturday June 21, 2008, 6:37 AM

For decades, the Passaic River has been one of the most polluted waterways in America, an industrial dumping ground so toxic that a single fish dinner from its depths heightens the risk of cancer.

And for just as long, federal and state officials have been unable to do anything about it, a result of legal wrangling and inertia.

That long legacy of inaction is about to come to an end.

On Monday, federal environmental officials will announce plans for a limited cleanup of the river, a first step that officials hope to broaden in the years ahead.

While details of the plan were not released Friday, environmental and state officials familiar with its general framework said the cleanup will focus on especially toxic "hot spots" near the former Diamond Shamrock manufacturing plant in Newark.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, the plant discharged dioxin, among the deadliest chemicals ever created, directly into the water. According to the state Department of Environmental Protection, dioxin levels in some parts of the Passaic are about a half-million times greater than those typically found in an urban river.

"This is not the total cleanup you want, but it starts the process instead of everyone continuing to fight with lawsuits while this stuff continues to move from the hot spots, down the river and into the bays and

oceans," said Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey chapter of the Sierra Club. "We've been waiting 40 years for a shovel to get into the ground."

Tittel, who said he spoke with officials in both the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state DEP, said the work will not involve traditional dredging, which can stir up contaminated silt. Instead, the EPA plans to use a cleaner method for removing as much as 9 feet of silt from the riverbed.

Two Corzine administration officials confirmed the broad strokes of the plan, saying that while a cleanup of the entire river has not been agreed to, the first phase represents an important starting point because the companies liable for the contamination are working with the government instead of fighting it.

The officials requested anonymity because they did not want to upstage the EPA's announcement on Monday.

U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), in a statement, called the plan "great news for the Passaic River and the dozens of communities along its banks."

An EPA spokeswoman, Mary Mears, declined to describe the project, saying some aspects of the plan had yet to be worked out. But she said the work to be announced Monday "will be a very significant step toward cleaning up the Passaic."

The announcement is scheduled for 1 p.m. Monday in Minish Park in Newark.

Tittel said he did not know which cleanup method the EPA had chosen.

One method, now in use in the upper Hudson River, involves machinery that resembles a giant vacuum, which would pump sediment into a facility that is typically built along the shoreline, Tittel said.

A second process, he said, involves the construction of slurry walls that re-route the river, allowing silt to be removed without spreading it in the water.

The former Diamond Shamrock plant, along the river in Newark's Ironbound section, is now covered in cement and topped with potted trees. Diamond acquired the property in 1951. It manufactured pesticides, including DDT and Agent Orange, the Vietnam-era defoliant, through 1969.

The byproduct -- dioxin -- was dumped so freely into the river that piles of the substance sometimes rose above the waterline. The factory and a miles-long swath of river were declared a federal Superfund site in 1982.

The firm's liability has since passed on to Tierra Solutions, a subsidiary of Spanish oil giant Repsol YPF S.A.

It was not known yesterday how much Tierra had agreed to pay toward the cleanup.

Staff writers Josh Margolin and Katie Wang contributed to this report.

From: Connolly, Hal (Menendez)
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2012 1:28 PM
To: 'Chris Sebastian'
Cc: Fefferman, Carolyn (Menendez)
Subject: RE: EPA News Release: Seventy Companies Reach Agreement with EPA to Remove Highly Contaminated Mud from Lyndhurst Section of the Passaic River

Chris-

How does this relate to the June 2008 EPA announcement about an initial cleanup at the Passaic River?

From: Chris Sebastian [mailto:Sebastian.Chris@epamail.epa.gov]
Sent: Monday, June 18, 2012 1:23 PM
Subject: EPA News Release: Seventy Companies Reach Agreement with EPA to Remove Highly Contaminated Mud from Lyndhurst Section of the Passaic River

hi all -- we'll issue the attached press release shortly -- please let me know if you have any questions.

thanks!

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